

Beginner's Guide to Office Greening

Office greening or biophilic design can be achieved by various means including indoor plants, views of flora and fauna (both live and in pictures), green walls and roof top gardens.

Biophilia is a term used to describe our basic human desire to connect to nature. There is a body of evidence to support that our psychological well-being is increased upon exposure to natural features and environments¹.

Contact with nature has been found to:

- Enhance healing and recovery from illnesses
- Increase cognitive functioning on tasks requiring concentration and memory
- Help to reduce stress and fatigue and enhance productivity

Offices with indoor plants have been found to experience a 10 per cent reduction in carbon dioxide levels in air-conditioned buildings and 25 percent reduction in buildings without air-conditioning. Plants also filter the air of pollutants, such as VOC's (Volatile Organic Compounds), which are off-gassed from paints, carpets, and furniture².

In a three-month study of University of Technology Sydney (UTS) office staff, participants with plants reported a reduction in stress and negative feelings by as much as 40 percent. International researchers have found plants can help to reduce the amount of sick leave people take. Increasing plant life in your working environment can have positive effect on human resourcing costs².

Quick Guide

Top tips for indoor plants (provided by [Emma Sadie Thompson](#))

Lighting

- Select plants for your office based on the amount of light available.
- For low light levels choose plants such as Sanseveria, Aspidistra, Spathyphyllum, Philodendron, Syngonium, Peperomia, and palms.
- For areas with natural light or bright indirect sunlight nearly anything will grow including ferns, hoyas, begonias, orchids, dracaena, and succulents.
- For areas with direct sunlight cacti and most succulents will survive, although take care in summer, especially west facing windows.

Watering

- Overwatering more commonly kills plants than under-watering.
- Stick your finger in the soil and if it still feels wet down to around 5cm then your plant probably doesn't need a drink.



- It is best to give your plants a good soaking less frequently rather than pouring a little bit of water on the top soil every few days; the water doesn't penetrate to the roots and root rot can occur.

Resources

[Eight Health Benefits of Indoor Plants](#)

[Biophilia hypothesis](#)¹ - Abstract from Journal of Happiness Study

[Need to Reduce Indoor Pollution?](#)² - Three-month study from the University of Technology Sydney

[Why Nature is the Tonic for Sick Cities](#) - Property Council Australia article

[BB Architects Office Greening case study](#) - David Brown, Director of [BB Architects](#) and self-proclaimed plant addict shares his story with us, and provides a comprehensive guide to buying and caring for indoor plants.

[Video](#) - Darren Bilsborough, author of [Don't Worry About the Rent](#), talks about biophilic design in this presentation to the [Adelaide Sustainable Building Network](#).

